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CAPT MARVEL THE PANDORA WELL

STRIKE IT RICH WITH LEON PITCH! THE COSMIC OIL WELL CORPORATION: GUARANTEED TO

TRIPLE YOUR MONEY! ONLY ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS PER SHARE! Lieutenant Ion Ierl of the Space Police

shook his head as he read the flamboyant printed matter. It was the old story, a con name, were worthless scraps of paper! Leon Fitch had disappeared a few months are with a

small fortune of other people's hard-carned money. Jon Jarl was assigned to hunt him to himself, "shysters like that sold take oil think by now, three hundred years later, nobody would fall for that gag. But they still do! The only difference is that in the twenneth century, the crooks claimed they could drill up oil in Tumbuctoo or the Gohi Desert

on Earth. Now they claim they've located oil in the asteroids or on Pluto or some other world. The same old cockeyed story?" Jon Jarl drove his rocket ship toward Nerid, the second moon of Neptune. Leon Fitch had last been reported heading there, no doubt to hide out till the heat was off, laughing up his sleeve at the fools who had coughed up

Nertd was a pale blue moon of fair size. Jon coasted over its jumbled surface and suddenly spotted a glinting quouset but below Leon Fitch's hide out! Ion landed out of slaht and crept up on foot, suspensing the man within. "You're under arrest, Leon Fitch!"

Fitch was desperata. "I'm not a crook," ha yellad back. "I'm an honest man!" "Sure, sure," grunted Jon, doubtfully But suddenly there was a gushing roar from 'My gusher!" scraeched Fitch joyfully, "At

Jon listened, thunderstruck, you're really drilling for oil? You're not a

You didn't give me a chance to explain," yelled Fitch. "My well is this way. Come on?" They ran out and Fitch led the way heyond a low hill, where Ion saw the hurs steel out derrick and all the riggings, manned by nativa labor. But the natives were all scattering at the roor from the well, "There she blows?" Fitch was dancing in

joy. "Now all those paople who bought my oil stock will cash in. We'll all be rich Yayyyy?" "I owe you an apology," Jon said. "I wish

I'd bought some of your stock myself, now! Sounds like a terrific oil gwiher coming un?" But there was another surprise. No black oil came gushing forth from underground! Instead, a hubbling frothy Buyld came up and aprayed all ovar the ground. Ion rubbed some hetween his hands, assounded

"Soap suds!" ha announced "Soap suds?" gasned Fitch, "What kind of crary well is thus?" "I don't know," Jon returned, "but avidently

on this world ages ago, other things formed underground instead of coal or oil as on soap suds. Too had, Fitch, I guess your bo-

"That means I'm bankrupt!" groaned Fitch, "And all those innocent investors lose! Soan ands, of all things, come up! Utterly worth,

nanza is a bust!"

"Wast!" Ion clutched his arm, "Look the auds have stopped gushing up. Now it sounds Earth, when they drill for oil, sometimes other

things come up first, like salt bring or sulphur or various gases. Maybe your oil lies underneath and is coming up now."

They waited with baited breath. Then, once again, a roar sounded—but this time it was a gas, a reddish gas that billowed up in hugeclouds and settled down all over.

our clothes—all stained red! That's some sort of a gazeous dys, coloring everything red! From bad to worse!"

"The Pandora Well!" mouned Pitch. "Init's what it is, Like Pandora's Box, all it gives out is a lot of troubles!"

And so it went! It was the strangest well ever heard of, on any world. The drill had bitten down into some incredible underground

pocket filled with unexpected products, formed by some unknown geological phenomenon of ages before. In swift succession they came up. The next was a more pleasant surprise, as a sweet ofter filled the air, like some sort of

a sweet odor filled the air, like some sort of perfume. But this was rapidly followed by a blast of hot steam that shot high into the air like a geyser, making them stumble back to avoid being scalded. Then more gas erupted,

"Everything comes up!" groaned Fitch.
"Everything but oil I'm ruined—ha, ha, ha!
I'm bankrupt. Ho, ho, ho! But wby am I
Jaughing? This is terrible—ha, ha, ha, ha!"
"Oxygen gas just came up." Jon said. "Pure

Ha, ha! I can't stop laughing either."

A gust of wind cleared the air and they returned to hormal. "What in the universe

will come up next: John wonstell. 2008.

now a dark thick liquid. Could it be—_!"

"Oil!" yelped Firth. "Oil at last!"

But it wasn't oil! It was a sticky liquid
that caupit at their feet as they tried to move

back.
"Sorry, Fitch," said Jon. "The joke's on us again. It's plain old glue!"
"The Pandora Well!" Fitch marmured. He

stood there, a broken figure. Jon pitied him.
All his hopes and dreams were shattered! He would return bankrupt, scorned as a failure, owner of a Pandora Well that gave forth

nothing but morkeries and evils!

But worse came from the well! More gastainted the air. Jon took one whilf and turned
pale. "Posson gas!" he snapped "We've got
to get out of here! Luckily, all the natives
left earlier and ran to the hills. But we've.

got to reach my ship-burry!"

"Not enough poison gas to kill us yet," Jon choked. "But more is posting out of the well. When the concentration gets high enough, we're sumk. Faster!" Barely in time, they staggered to the ship and stumbled in, clamming the hatch behind them, shutting off the poison gas. Panting,

Rue to their horror, the give from before

had spread out all over in a wide radius. They

could hardly lift their feet. Ion pulled Fitch

and atumbled in, clarming the hatch behind them, shutting of the point gas. Panting, Jon rammed power into the rockets and they zoomed away. "The Pandora Well," said Fitch hollowly.

"The Pandora Well, said Fitte monowly, staring vacantly." My whole life-ruined. All my money and a fortune from other people all sunk in that cursed well! I'm throughlicked! I'll never go back there."

"Oh, yes, you will," contradicted Jon, now turning the ship back.
"But why?" Fitch asked angrily. "I tell

you I won't yo back to that carred place!
Turn around, I say, or I'l--"
Fitch lunged at Jon with wild eyes. Jon
realized the poor man was half deranged by
his hard back, not rearonsible for his actions.

He had to clip him on the chin, knocking him cold—and harmless.

When Fitch next opened his eyes, he and Jon were back at the well. The taint of poison gas was gone, blown away by the wind. And

with a steady rose a silvery spray abot out of the well now, increasing in volume. "It's uit" yelled Jon. "A very pure highgrade oil. You see, I took you back, Fitch, because I figured sooner or later oil had to come up. There was a trace of it in those soam-

auds that came up first. I just couldn't let you become a quitter, Fitch."

PITCH stood paralyzed. No screeches of joy barrs from his lips. Only two thankful

tears rolled down his cheeks.
"Yes, that's really the Pandora Well," mused
Jon. "Remember the Pandora Box story?
After all the evils came out, finally a good

.....

THE END



















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